

Idaho Energy Buzz

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Idaho Energy Division Seeks to Make Biodiesel Easier to Find

We hear a lot these days about how biodiesel can help reduce our dependency on foreign oil and that it is better for the environment. But finding the organically produced fuel anywhere in Idaho can be a challenge. Currently, there are just a handful of filling stations that offer biodiesel in the entire state. The Idaho Energy Division is working with the Department of Energy, the Clean Cities Coalition, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Idaho Transportation Department to make biodiesel more readily available.

In order for a filling station to offer a new fuel, a substantial investment must first be made in infrastructure - new tanks, pumps, etc. – costs that can get pretty high in a hurry. The Energy Division has \$289,000 in federal grant money available to help fuel wholesalers, retailers, and vehicle fleet operators install the necessary equipment needed to distribute biodiesel.

A Request for Proposal has been posted on the Energy Division's website: www.energy.idaho.gov The deadline for submitting a proposal is April 14, 2006.

Applicants must be willing to contribute a minimum of 50 percent cost match in order for their proposal to be considered. For example, on a project costing \$150,000, the applicant would have to be willing to contribute \$50,000 to match \$100,000 in grant funds.

“We’ve experimented and worked with biodiesel fuel since the early eighties in Idaho,” IED Administrator Bob Hoppie said. “In fact, the Energy Division and the University of Idaho continue some of the pioneering work in biodiesel fuels. Idaho is now going to use these biodiesel infrastructure grants to offer a limited number of grants directly to vendors and fleets to construct biodiesel-pumping equipment and enhance public opportunity to buy biodiesel. We hope this makes biodiesel fuel readily available for anyone who wants to use it in their personal vehicles.”

Biodiesel is made from vegetable oils derived from crops, meaning it provides new markets for Idaho farmers. Because biodiesel is biodegradable, it burns much cleaner and produces significantly less air pollution than traditional diesel. When biodiesel is blended with diesel to make fuels like B20 (20 percent biodiesel) the blend creates superior lubricity, which reduces wear and tear on engine components, helping the engine last longer.

The Idaho Energy Division believes biodiesel production could be a significant element in helping our country achieve energy independence. By making alternative fuels easier to find, higher demand will hopefully follow.

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